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are about a dozen complete sets now in existence, either in private or government possession. In the preface of the "Enumeratio Plantarum in Japonia sponte crescentium" by Franchet and Savatier, an account of the work is given at some length on pp. vi and vii.

Botanical Laboratory, Harvard University.

K. MEIYABE.

Humblebees and Petunias.

In the October number of the BOTANICAL GAZETTE I noticed a note from Mr. Schneck, stating the manner in which the humblebees extract the honey from the flowers of *Physostegia Virginiana*, by making a slit in the base of the corolla. Following is a similar case: During last summer I noticed that the humblebees never attempted to enter the tubes of the common garden *Petunia*, but alighted on the upper side of the corolla, made a slit in its wall near the calyx and inserted their proboscis to extract the honey. The slits were about one-third of an inch long and were made by the bee pressing his mandibles against the corolla, and so forcing apart the tissue, which tears easily in a longitudinal direction. I have not yet noticed whether the flowers so mutilated are after all fertilized by other smaller insects entering the tube. GILBERT VAN INGEN.

Ithaca, N. Y.

CURRENT LITERATURE

Analytical Key to West Coast Botany, containing descriptions of 1,600 species of flowering plants growing west of the Sierra Nevada and Cascade crests, from San Diego to Puget Sound. By Volney Rattan. 12mo. 128 pp. A. L. Bancroft & Co., San Francisco, 1887.

The author is already known by his "Popular California Flora," and this is a continuation of the effort to bring the botany of the west coast within the reach of the schools. This "Analytical Key" is preliminary to a West Coast Botany for beginners, which is promised within three years. Umbelliferæ and Compositæ are omitted, and the more difficult monocotyledonous orders, but the names of the other species are placed within easy reach of beginners. This kind of work is very helpful to botanical science in general, and we expect it to result in a greater array of botanists than ever from the west coast.

Die natürlichen Pflanzenfamilien, by A. Engler and K. Prantl. Part I. Leipzig: Wilhelm Engelmann, 1887.

This is the beginning of a very extensive and important work, and the names of its editors assure botanists that it will be well done. It is intended to give an account of all the natural orders of plants, including their genera and principal species, and is fully and handsomely illustrated. Each order is to be monographed by a specialist, and thus the work will not only be of a high order, but probably completed within a reasonable time. This first part is devoted to palms, by O. Drude, and contains a full account of their distribution (geological as well as geographical), economic value, and structure, both vegetative and reproductive. Botanists will watch the progress of this work with great interest.